

been so wonderful in the last few years that even expert aviators will not hazard a guess.

All they can say is that the aeroplane is responding as nothing else is to the demand of the modern speed maniac for fast, faster, fastest. And what is inconceivable speed today may see, what?—200 miles an hour tomorrow?

It is but three years since the Gordon Bennett aeroplane race was instituted, and in that brief time the speed of aerial racing craft has more than doubled.

The 1909 race was won at 50 miles an hour. The other day, in 1912 Gordon Bennett race in Illinois, Jules Vedrines flew, around a small circular course, 105.5 miles an hour. And the same afternoon he bettered that by making 20 kilometres in less than 7 minutes—a speed of over 107 miles an hour.

Try to grasp what such speed means. For more than 100 miles this dare-devil little French mechanic, with his 140-horse-power monoplane, built in the likeness of a flying fish, outstripped any fish that ever flew, and any but the very fastest birds. Every minute, for 60 minutes in succession, he moved 9240 feet. Every second he put 154 feet behind him—half the distance of an average city block.

At that rate Vedrines could almost fly across the 3000 miles of the American continent between two sunrises. He could cross the Atlantic in a day and a night.

And this, aviators think, is only

the beginning. If the speed has doubled in three years, why may it not double again in the next three?

How long will it be until a man can fly from New York to Chicago between breakfast and lunch, and from Chicago to Denver between lunch and dinner.

And the pity of it is that America, which first fitted wings to the gas engine and made man at home in the air lines, has surrendered its conquest to foreigners. The last Gordon Bennett race went by default to the French, and the only use found for an American aeroplane was to go aloft for the purpose of photographing the flying Frenchman.

Our aviators lack scientific and mechanical knowledge, they lack the all-important engines of the Europeans, and they lack the monoplane models that are to our lumbering biplanes as the eagle to the quail.

OUR PRECISE ARTIST.



Quick lunch.

The leaf of the Ceylon talipot palm, which grows to a hundred feet in height, is so wide that it will cover twenty men,